

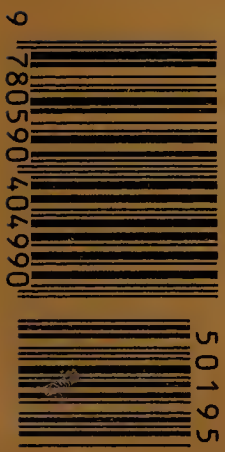
# RETURN OF THE UNICORN

A Story and Activity Book

Suzanne Lord



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Suzanne Lord

Illustrated by Neil Truscott

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Wilke opened his eyes, and for a while he wondered where he was. After all, for most of his twelve years he'd been an orphaned kitchen boy — his only future an endless sinkful of greasy pans.

Now, however, Wilke was squire to his favorite knight, W.K. He had his own room in Castle Comfort, where W.K. lived with his wife, the Lady Lily. Wilke smiled as he remembered that W.K. had once stood for “Woeful Knight.” Wilke’s best friend, Miranda, joked that W.K. probably stood for “Wonderful Kisses” nowadays!

Miranda was Wilke’s very best friend. Even as he thought about her, Miranda burst into the room. Wilke yelped and pulled his coverlet up just in time!

“Aren’t you dressed yet?” Miranda demanded, finishing a half-done braid of her golden hair. “Hurry

up — something's going on downstairs, and I want to find out what it is."

Wilke opened his mouth to snap at Miranda's bossiness.

"Come on," she continued. "Flatten out that straw you call hair, and get downstairs!"

As suddenly as she had arrived, Miranda turned and left.

"And a fine good day to you, too!" Wilke yelled at the closed door.

Well, he thought, I'll let her boss me around just this once — for old times' sake.

Wilke caught his reflection in the washbowl water. He was a bit shorter than Miranda, but he seemed older. He was freckled, sun-tanned from outdoor sword training, and getting stronger every day. Wilke's hair was actually brown — not straw-colored — and not as unruly as Miranda made it sound. Still, it did look stiff in the morning. Wilke pasted his hair down with water, and dressed.

Miranda was in training to become Lady Lily's lady-in-waiting. Wilke thought about when he first met her, then decided to stop. Those thoughts always reminded him of Beldin . . . and everyone missed Beldin too much to even think about him. Wilke met Miranda in the hallway, and they both headed for the castle kitchen.

"I dreamed about Beldin last night," Miranda said as though she'd read Wilke's mind. "I dreamed we'd see him soon."

Wilke smiled. He and Miranda both missed their magical unicorn friend. But Beldin was far away, leader of the last of the unicorns in Enchanted Valley. It was



the only place where unicorns could live in peace. Rare beasts now, unicorns were often captured for their magic or even killed for that single horn growing from their forehead. The outside world was far too dangerous for unicorns to drop by and visit old friends.

“Try not to think about your dream, Miranda,” Wilke said sympathetically. “It’s just wishful thinking.”

Wilke and Miranda entered the kitchen and immediately saw W.K. and Lady Lily having a very serious conversation. Nobody even noticed them coming in!

“You’re right, Miranda,” Wilke whispered. “Something is definitely up.”

Lady Lily was, thanks to her excellent cooking, “pleasantly plump.” Still, next to W.K., she looked small. She and W.K. both looked worried. W.K. was mainly upset because Lady Lily was upset. Lady Lily was the center of W.K.’s life. He couldn’t stand to see her fret about even the smallest problem. And whatever was wrong, it didn’t look small!

“... hasn’t happened since the day he came,” Lady Lily was saying. “But this morning, there was nothing but ashes in the oven. No fire at all!”

They were talking about Dragon. In return for Lady Lily’s cooking, which Dragon adored, he lit the home fires every morning by sneezing on the wood. This morning, however, the ovens were stone-cold.

“Did you call him at his cave?” W.K. asked.

“Certainly,” she answered. “And I got no response at all.”

“You don’t suppose he’s sick, do you?”

“Why don’t I go check on him?” Miranda volunteered. “Dragon won’t mind.”

"Oh — Miranda! Yes, dear, I wish you would do that."

Dragon had his own personal cave built into a nearby hill. Miranda peeked in.

"Are you okay?" she asked.

"No," a voice snuffled in the darkness. "I'm not okay at all."

"Poor Dragon — do you have a cold?"

"I don't know what I have. But I know what I don't have."

Dragon moved to the front of his cave.

"Watch," he said. Dragon took in a huge breath and blew. Nothing but air came out! No fire. Not even smoke.

Tears shone in Dragon's big eyes. Miranda was shocked. She hadn't known that dragons could cry.

"I can't show my face at the castle anymore," Dragon moaned. "I'm just an old has-been at fire breathing."

"Don't be silly," Miranda urged. "Everybody's worried about you. Come on."

Miranda half pushed Dragon to the castle door, where the household waited anxiously. Lady Lily rushed forward.

"Oh, Dragon! Thank goodness you're all right."

Dragon hung his head.

"I'm no good anymore. I woke up this morning and couldn't even work up a smoke ring. I can't earn my keep here anymore. I can't light the cooking fires. I'm no good for defense. You've all been so good to me, and I can't be a burden. I'll just drag my scaly old hide back to Dragon Valley and retire. . . ."



Lady Lily's eyes flashed angrily. "Stop it!" she cried. "You stop feeling sorry for yourself right now! Do you hear me?"

Dragon shut up.

"Moaning and groaning won't help one bit. We need help and we need it quickly. Mortimer, who knows the most about Dragon illnesses?"

W.K. blushed all the way to the roots of his hair when Lady Lily called him Mortimer. Wilke and Miranda tried not to giggle, but it was hard. Mortimer was W.K.'s real name, and he hated it so much that nobody dared call him by that name except Lady Lily. Unfortunately W.K. didn't have the heart to hurt Lady Lily's feelings by asking her to stop. So she kept calling him Mortimer and he kept wincing every time she did.

He was still wincing when he answered, "The Wizard of the Woods knows as much about anything as anyone in the world."

"Of course," Wilke chimed in. "He'll know just what to do!"

"Dear old Dragon," Miranda said, patting his scaly neck. "We'll get you well again!"

Dragon looked better already just knowing that his friends cared so much about him.

"What are we waiting for?" he asked. "Pack up and climb aboard!"

W.K., Lady Lily, Miranda, and Wilke packed a few things and said good-bye to everyone who worked at Castle Comfort. Then they climbed onto Dragon's back and set out toward the Forest of Doom. The Wizard's village was right in the middle of the forest for a good

reason. Friends of the Wizard had no trouble finding him. Enemies seldom found anything but trouble in the forest!

"I wonder what the Wizard will do?" Dragon fretted. "I hope it won't be too drastic. A dragon's throat is delicate, you know."

"Whatever we have to do," Miranda said firmly, "we'll do it."

"Easy for you to say," Dragon mumbled.

The little band of travelers walked for hours.

"Did you hear anything?" Miranda asked Wilke.

"Like what?"

"I heard someone call my name."

Wilke looked ahead. The Forest of Doom was not far away and getting closer by the minute. He shuddered.

"Come off it, Miranda," he urged. "The forest is spooky enough without your telling creepy stories!"

Miranda wasn't listening. She jumped off Dragon's back and headed straight into the forest!

"My dream. I knew it was true!" she yelled joyously.

For a minute, Wilke wondered if insanity ran in Miranda's family. Then he saw a shining white form emerge from the thick stand of trees, and he knew why Miranda was so happy.

"Beldin!" he exclaimed. "It's Beldin the unicorn!"

Beldin was almost smothered with everyone trying to hug him at the same time. Wilke had believed they'd never see Beldin again. After all, the last time Beldin had left Enchanted Valley, the evil Duke of Malefort had tried to use him as a weapon of war!

Although Wilke was delighted to see Beldin, he frowned. Now he knew that whatever was wrong with Dragon, it wasn't just a cold. Beldin had risked his life leaving Enchanted Valley — there had to be a good reason!

Beldin glowed with pleasure at seeing his old friends. The unicorn couldn't talk, but he had always been able to communicate mind-to-mind with Miranda. Miranda was only too happy to translate.

"Beldin says he can get us to the Wizard's village a lot faster than we could find it ourselves," Miranda said. "There's a shortcut!"

"Good," W.K. sighed. "I remember how the trails in this place can twist and turn. A person could get seriously lost here."

Beldin knows the quickest path to the Wizard's village. Can you find it? There are two ways to get to the village, but one is much longer than the other. All other paths are dead ends.



Almost before they knew it, the travelers were approaching the Wizard's village. First the Forest of Doom thinned out. Then they began to pass farm clearings. Finally small wood dwellings appeared. The dwellings became more and more clustered until they formed a village center. The Wizard's place wasn't hard to find — it was the only building made of stone instead of wood. Also it was large in comparison to the other buildings because of the size of the Wizard's spell-making room.

The Wizard came out to greet the travelers, looking impressive as usual. This time the old man looked especially wise and powerful with his white beard, purple robe, and long wand.

"Welcome, my friends," the Wizard said. "I'm delighted to see you all again — even under the circumstances."

Dragon blushed a little.

"You must be tired. Come into my home."

"Thank you, Mister — er, Wizard of the Woods," Lady Lily said politely.

"Please," he answered. "Just call me Woody."

The Wizard waved his guests inside, sweeping his arm majestically. All the grass where his wand pointed turned pink.

"Oooops," Woody exclaimed. "I must watch where I aim this thing."

Inside, Woody's pet gremlins had set up enough space for everyone to talk. Lady Lily had never met the Wizard until now, and she was a little nervous. They were in his spell-making room, which was big enough for everyone — Dragon included. Lady Lily leaned close



to W.K. and took a cautious look around.

Even though the room was quite large, one entire wall was stacked to the ceiling with books. Lily wondered how Woody ever found the right one! There were shelves and tables everywhere, all full of equipment — and what equipment there was! Mathematical calculators, weights and measuring devices, powders, potions, and magical stones cluttered every available space. Off to one side Lily saw a huge sunken fireplace with an immense cauldron hanging over it from a hook on a beam. Lily didn't know quite what Woody was making in that cauldron — but she had an idea it wasn't Sunday dinner!

Woody noticed that Lady Lily looked frightened.

"My dear," he said soothingly, "it's true that I work with the magic arts. But you needn't fear their power in my hands. I work only for good.

"Evil turns back on a person. Wizards using their powers for evil will be destroyed by them in the end."

"If you're a wizard," Lily said timidly, "then you already know why we're here. It's Dragon. He's lost his . . ."

" . . . fire. Yes," Woody said. "My friends, I have good news about that. And I also have bad news."

"What's the good news?" Dragon asked hopefully.

"Your malady is not permanent," Woody replied. "It can be cured by drinking a potion."

Dragon relaxed.

"Terrific!" he said. "Now I'm ready. Hit me with the bad news."

"You're not sick."

"This is bad news?" Dragon asked, puzzled.



"You've been enchanted."

"ENCHANTED?" everyone cried at once.

"How do you know?" W.K. asked.

Woody motioned for everyone to approach a table. On the table stood a crystal ball.

"Look closely into this ball," Woody said. Then he closed his eyes and said some words in an ancient and powerful language. Slowly a picture formed in the ball. It was an evil-looking face, talking to something that looked like a mountain of armor!

"I know that armor," W.K. said tensely. "It's the Duke of Malefort!"

"Correct," Woody said. "And the other person is an Evil Wizard in his employ. Listen hard."

"SO," the Duke of Malefort roared (he never spoke in an ordinarily loud voice — always a humungously loud one!), "YOU SNEAKED INTO CASTLE COMFORT'S TERRITORY UNDER COVER OF MAGIC AND DOUSED THAT DRAGON'S FIRE?"

"Yes, Duke."

"GOOD. WITHOUT THAT FIRE-BREATHING FOOL, CASTLE COMFORT IS AS GOOD AS MINE."

The picture faded as the two faces exploded with evil laughter.

"Lily," W.K. cried in alarm. "They said Castle Comfort! That's our home!"

"We must get back right away," Lady Lily said.

"And how will your castle defend itself?" Woody asked. "You've lost your best weapon — a fire-breathing dragon! Right now Dragon is about as dangerous as a large scaly pussycat!"

"Beldin says that some of the ingredients to help

Dragon are from rare, magical beings," Miranda said. "He came to help us collect what the Wizard needs to cure Dragon before the Duke can get to Castle Comfort."

"It'll take a couple of days for the Duke to move his troops there," Woody added. "I'll draw up a list of what I need to get Dragon's fire back. Let's see . . . ."

Woody pointed his wand at a quill pen. The pen, by itself, began to write.

After a time the Wizard said, "I think that's the last thing we'll need." The paper shook itself, dried its ink and floated over to W.K.

W.K. looked at the finished list.

"You don't want much, do you?" he said sarcastically.

"Read it to all of us, will you?" Wilke asked.

"All right," W.K. warned, "but you're not going to like it! We have to find: 1) a piece of leprechaun gold, 2) three teardrops from a giant, 3) a piece of cooking wood from an ogre, 4) one hair plucked from the beard of a troll, and 5) a pinch of faerie dust from the Kingdom of Forgetfulness!"

"Faeries? Leprechauns? Ogres?" Dragon said, turning a paler shade of green than usual.

"Sorry," Woody shrugged, "but I'm not the one who cast this spell."

"We'll never get all this stuff in time," Miranda fretted.

"Why not split into two groups?" Wilke suggested. "That'll give us twice as many chances to get what we need."

"Beldin says he can carry Wilke and me," Miranda announced.

"Mortimer," Lady Lily stated firmly, "I'm going with you."

"And," Dragon added eagerly, "you'll both ride on me!"

Woody had maps of the surrounding area brought to each group of travelers. "I wish I could be of more help. Getting these ingredients won't be easy."

"We'll get what you need," Wilke said confidently. "When Dragon is cured, the Duke of Malefort will have to stick to ruining his *own* castle!"

W.K.'s team decided to get the gold piece and troll hair. Beldin's team chose the giant's tears and the ogre's firewood. They all agreed to meet at the border of the Kingdom of Forgetfulness to get the faerie dust together by the afternoon of the second day. Then they'd get everything back to Woody and have Dragon cured before the Duke took over Castle Comfort.

Woody watched his friends begin their travels, then decided to keep an eye on Malefort and his Evil Wizard, Morlock. Consulting his crystal ball, he saw the Duke busily packing for Castle Comfort's conquest. He was hungry. He was irritable. And he was in a hurry! The last thing he wanted was to speak with his pesky but useful Wizard. Still, Morlock had gotten rid of Castle Comfort's dragon. And Morlock was really, really evil — the Duke liked that. He had the wizard shown in.

"WELL, WHAT IS IT?" Malefort demanded.

"Sire," Morlock reported. "My magic ring has revealed important information to me."

"START TALKING. I'M BUSY."

"Castle Comfort's household has consulted the Wiz-

ard of the Woods for help. He knows the cure for the Dragon's malady."

"HE WHAAAT?"

"No need to worry, sire," Morlock said hastily. "The ingredients are either impossible or deadly to gather. Our biggest problem is elsewhere."

"GET TO YOUR POINT!"

"The unicorn Beldin is helping them. And he'll also help defend Castle Comfort if necessary. A unicorn's magic is just as bad for us as that Dragon's fire, you know . . . ."

"YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME. THAT MAGIC ON THE HOOF FOULED ME UP ONCE BEFORE!"

"How unfortunate."

"I DON'T WANT SYMPATHY. I WANT THE HIDE OF THAT UNICORN ON MY WALL! HE'LL NEVER STOP MY PLANS AGAIN!"

The scene faded, and Woody looked worried. He hadn't known about Morlock's magic ring. "I wonder what kind of spells he can throw with that?"

Here are some “spells” for you to work. They’re a little different than the kind Wizards use, but both change one thing into something else.

Each of the words on top has become the word on the bottom by changing only one letter at a time. The letter you must change is circled, and every word must make sense. One “spell” has already been worked for you. Good luck!

1. H A T

H U T

H U M

S U M

2. F A R M

H I K E

3. M I L K

H O M E

4. B U R N

C O L D

5. Y A W N

L E G S

6. S H O E

C L I P



W.K., Lady Lily, and Dragon set off to the left.

"I hate to be particular," Dragon said after a few moments, "but do we know where we're going?"

"We're going to find a leprechaun," W.K. stated confidently.

"Why not just order one?" Dragon mumbled sarcastically. Sometimes W.K.'s confidence was a little hard to take.

"Let's see," W.K. said, ignoring Dragon's comment. "There must be some way to figure out where to find a leprechaun. Lily dear, isn't there something about pots of gold, or —"

"A rainbow!" Lily cried. "Leprechauns keep a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow! All we have to do is find a rainbow and we'll find our leprechaun."

"Doesn't look like rain," Dragon said dismally.

"Dragon has a point," W.K. agreed.

"Shhh, Mortimer!" Lily said shortly. "I'm thinking. Is there a waterfall nearby?"

Dragon checked the map. "Yes, there is," he answered, "but I don't see —"

"Let's go, then. I'll tell you all why when we get there."

Soon W.K., Lily, and Dragon were looking at a large and beautiful waterfall.

"When I was growing up," Lady Lily explained, "my father's castle was near a waterfall. When I looked into the mist a certain way, I almost always found a rainbow. Sometimes I even found two!"

"Lily, my love, you're a genius!" cried W.K.

The trio moved along the riverbank toward the

waterfall, keeping a watchful eye on the waterfall's mist.

"I see one," Dragon whispered. "Right over there."

"I see it, too," W.K. said excitedly. "One end of it is in midair and the other end goes — uh-oh."

"What's the matter?" Lily asked.

"The other end goes straight into the waterfall."

"Oh, dear. Mortimer, I won't allow you to go into a waterfall. You'd be smashed onto the rocks!"

"Not necessarily," W.K. thought aloud. "Come with me."

All three edged around the waterfall until they could see it from the side. W.K. smiled.

"I was hoping for this. I think there's a cave in back of the waterfall. If we can get in from the side, we can walk *behind* the falls. If I'm right, the waterfall will flow in front of us like a curtain in front of a door!"

"I'll go first," Dragon said.

Dragon bent his huge head around and poked it through the side of the waterfall, where the water was thinnest. When his eyes opened, Dragon realized W.K. was right. He wasn't looking at water any more. Behind the fall was a large cave! With his tail Dragon motioned W.K. and Lady Lily forward.

The cave was damp, but surprisingly warm. A yellow light shone from the back.

"Quiet!" W.K. whispered. "Something's back there, and it had better be a leprechaun. I'm going in. If I don't come back soon, you two get back to Woody, where it's safe."

Lily was scared for W.K., but tried to look brave.

Dragon patted her tiny hand with his huge, scaly paw. W.K. raised his shield and went forward into the cave.

Following the yellow light, he soon found its source — a shining pot of gold. Beside it, counting gold pieces, stood a little man dressed in an odd outfit.

“Are you a leprechaun?” W.K. asked.

“Are you an idiot?” the little man shot back. “Of course I’m a leprechaun!”

“Terrific!” cried W.K., reaching for the gold. “I only need one piece of this. You can keep the rest. Thanks a lot and good-bye . . . .”

“Not so fast, buddy,” the leprechaun said, slapping W.K.’s hand. “You have to do one little thing first.”

“What’s that?”

“Unless you can hold me down for one full minute, that gold piece will turn into mud as soon as you leave the cave.”

The little man sat firmly on the ground, staring at W.K.

W.K. had to work hard to keep from laughing. Hold this tiny person down for one minute? Why, he could hold him down all day! W.K. grasped the leprechaun by the shoulders and started counting seconds.

“Remember,” the leprechaun said. “You can’t let me go, no matter what I turn into.”

“T-t-t-turn into?” W.K. stammered, just before he realized he was now holding down a large, angry bull!

Desperately W.K. held on. He held on as the leprechaun became a fish, a snake, and an eagle. He held on as the little man became a giant, a griffin, and several animals W.K. had never imagined. He even held

on as the leprechaun became water, smoke, and (this was the hardest) the smell of sugar-cured ham!

Finally the longest minute of W.K.'s life was over. The leprechaun looked peeved.

"All right, all right," the little man grumbled. "Take your gold and get out of here. You've earned it."

If the little man had any more conditions, W.K. didn't want to know about them. He took one piece of gold, tucked it safely away, and left in a hurry!

When W.K. returned, Lady Lily went ahead and cried — this time from happiness.

W.K. is trying to hold onto the leprechaun, but it isn't easy! The leprechaun has changed its shape. What has it turned into? Connect the dots to find out.



Woody watched W.K.'s progress through his crystal ball. He sighed with relief at W.K.'s success, then turned the crystal's attention to Morlock.

Morlock sat in his spell room, looking exhausted.

"I've tried every spell I know, and I can't harm a hair on that unicorn's head. I'm simply too far away to do him any harm. I must be closer to the unicorn for my magic to be strong enough."

Woody shuddered. He too knew that magic faded with distance. If Morlock got close enough to do Woody's friends harm, Woody couldn't help them from Wizard Village.

"I must also get close enough to help," he decided.

When W.K. and his party had headed left from the Wizard's Village, Miranda, Wilke, and Beldin turned towards the right.

"Beldin says he knows where a giant's castle is, and it's not too far away," Miranda told Wilke.

"What is it we need again?"

"Tears. We need three teardrops from a giant."

"What are we going to keep them in?"

"This," Miranda said, holding up a rather large oiled goatskin bag.

"Oh, terrific," Wilke snorted. "We'll just politely go up to a giant and say, 'Excuse me, but would you mind crying into this goatskin?' I'm sure he'll be only too happy —"

Wilke stopped speaking. The trees ahead looked funny. The top of one was bright yellow. And the next one looked purple.

Miranda suddenly looked shaky. "Beldin says those aren't trees. He says they're flowers."



"In that case, can we leaf now?" Wilke quipped bravely.

Even Beldin shook his head at Wilke's dreadful pun.

"Snake!" cried Miranda, trying to turn Beldin aside.

"Worm," Wilke corrected. "Think big."

Wilke realized what a dangerous place this was. If a worm was that size — how big were the *birds*?

"Let's hurry," he urged. "The faster we get this done, the faster we can get out of here."

Beldin sped in the direction of the giant's castle. They passed human-sized carrots, boulder-sized tomatoes growing on hill-sized stalks, and narrowly escaped being slimed by a garden snail the size of a horse.

Suddenly Beldin stopped short! Was it because they were getting closer to the castle, Wilke wondered? No. Beldin and Miranda were very quiet, watching something. Without actually moving, Wilke shifted his eyes and was terrified to see an enormous cat ready to spring at their slightest move! Wilke had been wondering what their size was in proportion to the things around them. Now, sickeningly, he realized they were about the size of a mouse.

For a while Beldin remained perfectly still. Then he saw a mole hole to run for and sent Miranda a mental message. Miranda was still wondering how she could tell Wilke to run without moving her lips, when the cat sprang.

In a flash Beldin headed for the mole hole. He was fast, but no match for a giant cat. They were losing the race of their life.

"No!" Miranda screamed. Wilke closed his eyes.

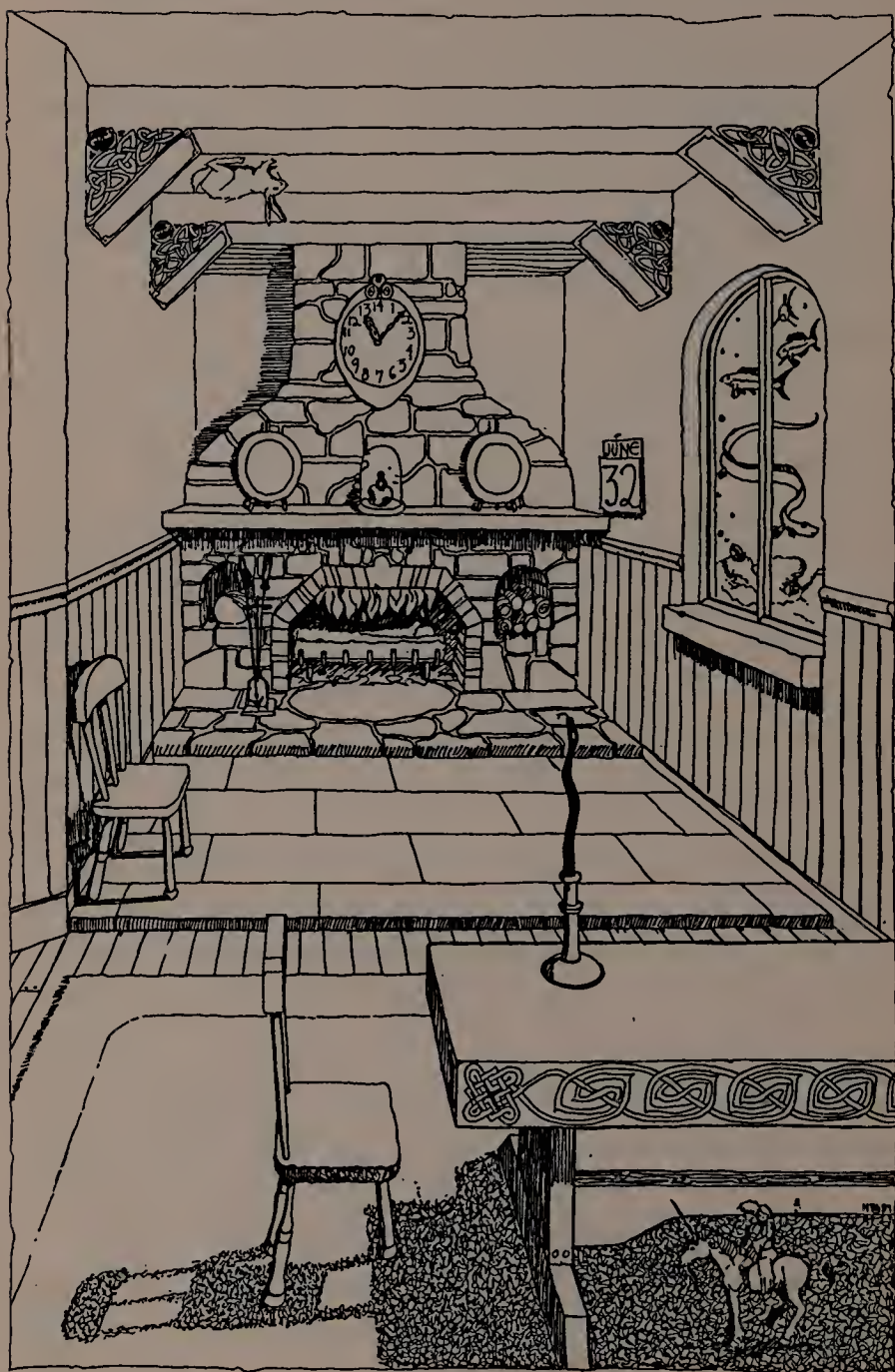
The air split as a giant “MMRRROOOWRRRR!” exploded from the cat. Beldin and his two passengers made it into the mole hole. But something was weird. The cat was running in a completely different direction — and the earth was shaking all around them.

“Earthquake!” Miranda yelled. They had escaped only to be buried alive. Worse, poor Wilke had gone mad. He was looking out of the hole, laughing.

“That was no earthquake,” Wilke hooted, wiping tears of laughter from his eyes, “just the only thing big enough to scare a cat that size — the world’s biggest watchdog!”

The three friends wasted no time. Soon they arrived at the giant’s castle and slipped inside by way of a mousehole.

Some people say that giants are just like anybody else, only more so. There are seven things in this room that aren't at all normal. Can you spot them?



To a giant the castle was comfy. But to Wilke, Miranda, and Beldin each room was the size of a field. Of course, they expected the furniture to be huge — but Miranda was horrified when they hid in a corner and the dust balls came up to her knees!

The three friends also found out how loud a giant's world could sound to small ears. Footsteps, voices, a creaking chair — every noise was magnified. Smells were magnified as well, as Wilke found out when he tried to sneak behind a giant pair of shoes!

"Well, we're here," Wilke said. "All we need is a weeping giant."

To their amazement, the trio heard someone wailing at the top of their lungs! Wilke slapped his forehead with the palm of his hand.

"Of course! Why didn't I think of it?"

"Think of what, Wilke?"

"The kind of giant that probably cries all day long!" Miranda looked blank.

"A BABY giant!"

The three friends found the nursery.

"Beldin says he can get us close to the baby. He's very good with children."

The baby giant looked about two years old. Its enormous eyes were blurry from crying, but they lit up with delight as the tiny unicorn climbed into its playpen.

"Toy!" the baby cooed, reaching for Beldin.

"Toy?" Miranda asked.

"What did you expect a baby to say?" Wilke groaned.

" 'Unicorn'?"

“Don’t be so grumpy. We’re really getting somewhere now — Beldin’s very close to the baby.”

“Miranda, we need tears, remember? That baby is so happy even its gums are smiling.”

“Toy. Want toy,” the baby gurgled, lurching forward, grabbing for Beldin. Miranda and Beldin both realized too late what a baby this size could do to a very small unicorn.

“Forget the baby, Beldin,” Miranda yelled. “Just get away!”

Beldin tried, but nothing is as determined as a baby that wants something. Now the baby was trying to stand up on its wobbly legs and walk toward its “toy.”

“Wilke, help me — before that child falls and squishes Beldin!”

Together, Miranda and Wilke hoisted a huge baby rattle and managed to get it to make a sound. When the baby turned for an instant, all three friends ran for the door. They made it just as the baby’s giant mother entered the room.

Now — too late — the baby was crying.

“What’s your next idea?” Miranda snapped at Wilke.

“Listen! I hear something over there.”

The trio followed the sound to their next giant. This one was a man, nailing wood in a workroom.

“Maybe,” Miranda thought aloud, “if he hit his thumb, it would hurt enough for him to cry a little.”

“I’ll see what I can do.”

Wilke climbed up the worktable inch by inch. He figured he’d distract the giant and get him to miss the nail, banging his finger instead. On the tabletop at last,



Wilke waited for his chance. The giant hammered with total concentration. Suddenly Wilke dashed across the table and hid in some wood shavings.

“Mice!” the giant roared, bringing his hammer down so hard that it shook the table. The giant didn’t hit his finger by a long shot — his hammer was headed straight for Wilke’s hiding place!

Quickly Wilke slipped behind the pieces of wood that the giant had been nailing together. Crouching low, he ran as quickly as possible to the end of the table. Wilke slid down the table leg at record speed and soon lay panting with fright near his companions. The giant was still pounding around on the table, looking for the mouse. Wilke’s heart was pounding as hard as the giant’s hammer!

“Next time you have an idea, Miranda,” Wilke gasped, “keep it to yourself.”

Miranda was silent for a moment. Then she said, “Beldin just told me that giants love to eat. Let’s find the kitchen.”

The third giant was a huge cook, who was cutting giant vegetables for a giant stew. After their last adventures, Wilke noticed two things: 1) the cook wasn’t crying and 2) she had a giant carving knife!

“I’ve got an idea, ” Miranda said. “Give me the goatskin.”

Grabbing the bag, Miranda was halfway up a sack of potatoes before Wilke or Beldin could stop her. Soon Miranda was on top of the table, hiding behind a stalk of giant celery. The giant cook cut giant carrots and hummed a happy giant tune. Slowly and carefully



Miranda began rolling an onion toward the cook. After a while she had rolled several onions within reach of the cook.

The giant cook had actually planned on doing the potatoes next. But when she saw the onions sitting there, she changed her mind. Funny, the cook thought, I don't remember putting those there. She began peeling and cutting up the onions. Tears welled up in her eyes. She wondered why onions always made her cry, and she dabbed her eyes with a corner of her apron.

The giant cook peeled onions, cried, peeled onions, cried, and dabbed her eyes with her apron again and again. The apron reached down to the top of a chair. Tiny Miranda stood unseen on this chair. Each time the tear-stained apron dropped down, Miranda squeezed some tears from it into the goatskin. When the skin was full, Miranda climbed down the potato sack.

"Got it!" she crowed triumphantly to her friends.

Wilke, Beldin, and Miranda left the giant cook still peeling and crying, peeling and crying . . .

Woody watched Beldin and his friend's progress from his crystal ball, relieved that all went well. But it was time to look in on less pleasant faces. As the Duke of Malefort's face focused, Woody could see that he was not happy.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T PUT THAT UNICORN OUT OF BUSINESS?"

"I'm too far away to have any real effect on him."

"GET CLOSER!"

"My exact thoughts, sire. Since I put the spell on Castle Comfort's dragon, I know what their crew needs

to find if they mean to break the spell. The last ingredient is at the Kingdom of Forgetfulness. If you allow me to travel with your troops, we can swing that way before laying waste to Castle Comfort. I can wrap Beldin in a spell he'll never get out of, keep the dragon's spell from being broken, and you can get rid of everyone else in one sweep!"

"WELL, WIZARD," Malefort boomed happily, "THAT'S NOT A BAD PLAN AT ALL. FINE, THEN — COME ALONG!"

The crystal's picture faded. Woody allowed himself a little smile. "I think it's time Morlock and I had a wizard's reunion," he mumbled as he waved his wand. Woody's things packed themselves in a traveling cart while he personally packed his precious crystal ball inside a black velvet case.

Nightfall came fast. W.K., Lily, and Dragon quickly found a campsite downriver from what they now called "Leprechaun Falls." W.K. caught fish and Lily cooked them over an open fire, while Dragon polished off all the fruit from a wild pear tree he'd found.

Next morning at dawn Dragon forgot himself and tried to blow a breakfast fire. Instead, he blew ashes everywhere! W.K. kindled a fire and Lady Lily made a nice herbal tea. After breakfast they all set off for the day's adventure.

"I must say I'm not looking forward to collecting our next ingredient," Lady Lily sighed. "We need troll hair, and I've heard that trolls are the most desperately ugly creatures!"

"At least we may not have to travel far," W.K. said.

"Why?" asked Dragon.

"Because trolls live under bridges. And we're already by a river!"

By midmorning the travelers approached their first bridge.

"Hey," W.K. called out, "Troll! Come out!"

"Eh? What's that?" a voice asked.

"Mortimer, what luck!" Lady Lily cried. "You've found one already."

"Er, you are a troll, aren't you?" W.K. asked politely.

"One farthing per person. Next year it'll probably be two. A person can hardly afford things as it is, and . . . ."

"I think he's hard of hearing," Lily whispered to W.K.

"Are you a troll, sir? A troll?" W.K. asked more loudly.

"And I told you, dagnabbit! One farthing apiece, or you don't get across this bridge!"

"SIR," W.K. yelled at the top of his lungs. "IS THIS A TROLL BRIDGE?"

"What? A troll bridge? Why no, sonny — this is a *toll* bridge. Nearest troll bridge is an hour downriver. Why don't you young folks speak up when you want to know something?"

"THANKS," W.K. screamed as nicely as he could.

"Banks? No, not many of those around anymore. Folks are too poor. In my day . . . ."

Traveling downstream, they reached a bend in the river by noontime. Suddenly the lovely green riverbank turned slimy with mud and muck. The trees were covered with moss, and everything in sight seemed gray.

“This is the ugliest place I’ve ever seen,” Dragon commented.

Dragon was wrong. He hadn’t seen the troll bridge yet. The decaying bridge had once been wooden, but now slippery green algae covered it. Underneath the bridge sat a slimy-looking lump. Shocked, Lily realized that the lump had a door. Someone lived inside.

“I think this is the place,” Lady Lily choked.

A raspy voice emerging from the hut demanded, “Who goes there?”

W.K. cleared his throat. “Three travelers. Are you the troll of this bridge?”

“I be. You fight, or no cross bridge.”

Slowly the algae-covered door opened, and something moved across the threshold. An extremely hairy troll emerged. He was almost as wide as he was long and, though he wore some sort of animal skin, he looked as though he were wrapped in a green rug.

“Oh, Mortimer,” Lady Lily gasped. “He’s covered in *moss!*” Lily concentrated very hard on not becoming sick.

The troll planted himself in front of W.K., who had climbed off Dragon. W.K. wasn’t at all sure how one went about fighting a moving moss ball. The troll seemed to sense W.K.’s confusion and looked as if he were enjoying it.

“Fight. Now!” The troll moved forward menacingly.

It was too much. Lady Lily simply could not stand the thought of her Mortimer having to grapple this slimy green lump. Why, she’d never get his armor clean again!

Suddenly a crazy plan came into her head, and to

everyone's surprise — even her own — Lily jumped off Dragon's back and glided gracefully toward the troll.

Looking every inch as though she were being introduced to someone at a ball, Lady Lily smiled.

"How do you do! My, what a charming place — and the color scheme is absolutely divine. How clever you must be," she said sweetly.

The troll stood and stared. He'd never seen such sweetness.

"As a matter of fact, these are exactly the colors of a tapestry that I'm working on for our feasting hall. You know how damp they can get, and the weather's been so beastly lately. Oh! This is the precise color I need for the forest section. Do you mind? I have such a ghastly head for colors and I'm sure I'll never remember the exact green that I need . . . ."

Smiling and talking all the while, Lady Lily moved rapidly, patting the troll on the head and at the same time plucking a hair from his beard!

"Oh, thanks ever so. I'm terribly sorry we can't stay for tea, but we simply must move on. You know how it is — busy, busy, busy! We've had a smashing time, really, and you're such a dear. Do visit when you're in town."

Daintily, she hopped back onto Dragon. W.K. hopped on, too. Lady Lily turned and blew a kiss at the troll. "Toodle-oo," she trilled.

The three travelers packed the troll hair safely away and hurried toward their next destination.

The troll stood where he was for the rest of the day, trying to figure out what had happened.



Some people think all trolls look alike — ugly! But they're not exactly alike. Only two of these trolls are identical. Which two?





Woody left the village and drove toward the Kingdom of Forgetfulness the morning of the second day. If he didn't beat Morlock there, Woody knew his friends could be in very grave trouble. As his cart sped itself forward through the Forest of Doom, Woody watched an ugly picture emerge from his crystal ball.

The Duke of Malefort's troops were on the move. So many men in armor marched forward that they looked like a huge silver snake. The Duke looked at them with obvious pleasure. Beside him, riding a black horse with devil-red eyes, sat Morlock.

"I'LL TAKE CARE OF CASTLE COMFORT," the Duke roared. "YOU GET ME THAT UNICORN."

Morlock smiled. "Before tonight you'll have his horn for a drinking cup," he sneered.

That same morning Wilke, Miranda, and Beldin woke at their overnight campsite. After a breakfast of berries (for Wilke and Miranda) and buttercups (for Beldin), they set out for the next ingredient on their list.

"I hope this ingredient is easier to get than the last one," Wilke sighed.

"Don't hold your breath," Miranda replied. "We need wood from an ogre's cooking fire."

"At least an ogre is our size."

"Beldin says an ogre will eat anything. One of its favorite dishes is people."

Wilke said nothing.

Beldin led his friends to a dry, desolate area that looked as though the life had been sucked out of it. Miranda sensed something wrong about the area, but

she couldn't place it. Then Beldin told her — it was too quiet. There were no animals. Not a bird, a squirrel, or an insect. Nothing. Even the plants looked as if they didn't want to be there.

"Beldin says the ogre's hut is up this path."

Along the way thorn bushes tore at Beldin's mane and Miranda's braids.

"It's almost as though the place is alive and doesn't like us," Miranda shuddered.

"I know something about ogres," Wilke admitted finally. "When I was a kitchen boy in Castle Malefort, there was one chained in the dungeon. The Duke used to tease it for fun."

"That's disgusting."

"So was the ogre. I had to feed it. You're right about ogres eating anything. Once I reached in a little too far and my finger almost became dessert! That ogre was strong and mean, too. But mostly I remember one outstanding thing about it."

"What?"

"It was stupid. Ogres are probably the stupidest things on two feet."

"Beldin says he hopes this one is. Look — there's the hut!"

Wilke, Miranda, and Beldin approached the ogre's home. Its yard was littered with unpleasant reminders of past meals. Bones of all sizes and shapes lay scattered among the rubble. Even Beldin shuddered.

"He's home," Wilke whispered. "I can see smoke coming from the chimney."

Inside, the ogre sensed a change in the air. Something was coming.

*Meat*, he thought. He drooled and picked up a large, nail-studded club.

“Beldin and I will keep the ogre outside while you sneak in and get the wood,” Miranda said.

“No,” Wilke objected, “It’s too dangerous for you!”

“Don’t worry,” Miranda explained. “You forget that Beldin and I can communicate with one another. If ogres are as stupid as you say, we won’t have much trouble keeping it confused.”

Wilke had to agree that he couldn’t think of anything better.

Miranda and Beldin stood at either end of the yard. Wilke sneaked close to the hut’s only door and waited.

“Yahhh!” Miranda taunted. “Ogres stink!”

Miranda’s insults were lost on the ogre’s tiny mind. He only knew that meat was outside, close enough to catch. Grasping his club, the ogre ran outside.

Miranda and Beldin rushed the ogre from both sides at once. Beldin poked his unicorn’s horn at him, and Miranda poked from the other side with a stick.

This confused the ogre. What was this strange meat that came from two places at once? How could he catch this?

Meanwhile, Wilke slipped inside the hut. First the stench almost knocked him out. Then the smoke almost blinded him. Finally Wilke located the firewood pile.

Outside, the ogre panicked. He only knew he had to get away from this poking, pinching meat. *Home is safe*, his tiny brain told him. Blindly, the ogre turned, ran into his hut, and shut the door tightly.

Wilke looked up, frozen with fear. There was only one way out of the hut — and the ogre was standing

in front of it! No longer confused, the ogre looked at the boy in front of him. *Good meat*, his brain signaled. He reached out, drooling again.

Quickly, Wilke grabbed a stick of wood and thrust one end into the fireplace. The wood caught fire almost at once. Wilke swooped the burning end at the ogre in a wide arc. *Danger*, the ogre's few working brain cells screamed. The ogre jumped away.

Wilke bolted for the door. Miranda already sat on Beldin, waiting, as Wilke ran outside. Jamming the firebrand into the ground to put out its fire, Wilke reached up for Miranda's hand.

"Get me up!" he shouted.

"With pleasure!"

Beldin took off at double speed. Once safely out of the area, Wilke shook all over. "I c-c-can't s-s-stop."

"It almost got you," Miranda choked. "It would have . . ."

Beldin stood nuzzling both of his friends. For once, Miranda was glad that Wilke couldn't hear Beldin's thoughts.

"...would have eaten you," the unicorn thought quietly.

**The ogre is as close to a monster as anything around. In this monster marathon match-up, can you match the monster to its description?**

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. VAMPIRE                        | a. Giant ape.                   |
| 2. CYCLOPS                        | b. Full-moon howler.            |
| 3. WEREWOLF                       | c. Human made from spare parts. |
| 4. ZOMBIE                         | d. The walking dead.            |
| 5. CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON | e. Undead bloodsucker.          |
| 6. FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER         | f. One-eyed monster.            |
| 7. GODZILLA                       | g. Giant dinosaur.              |
| 8. KING KONG                      | h. Part fish, part human.       |



By the end of the second day, it was time for both groups to meet at the Kingdom of Forgetfulness to gather the last ingredient needed for Woody's spell-breaking potion.

W.K., Lady Lily, and Dragon traveled from the river through dense forest growth until they came to a clearing covered with a strange mist.

"Must be fog," W.K. decided.

"No," Dragon corrected. "That's where the faeries' kingdom starts."

"Not very big, is it?"

"It doesn't have to be. Faeries are very tiny. And I've heard that this place may not look like much, but it's very dangerous."

"Whatever do you mean, Dragon?" Lady Lily asked. "I've seen faeries, and they're perfectly lovely."

"That's just it," Dragon explained. "They're *too* beautiful. Humans wandering into the faerie kingdom forget everything — troubles, worries, even who they are. They might forget to eat or sleep. They forget why they're there. And they forget to leave. Sometimes humans who stumble out by accident think they've been away for a day or two — and find out they've been gone twenty years!"

"So *that's* why it's known as the Kingdom of Forgetfulness," Lady Lily shuddered. "I'll certainly be glad when the others arrive. Perhaps Beldin knows how to get this last ingredient."

"Faeries. Forgetfulness," W.K. scoffed. "Don't be silly. I'll be out in twenty seconds with a bag of faerie dust!"

"No! Don't!" yelled Dragon.

“Mortimer! Stop!” Lily cried at the same time.

They were too late. W.K. could no longer hear them. Just at that moment Wilke, Miranda, and Beldin came to the clearing.

“Where’s W.K.?” Wilke asked.

Dragon pointed into the mist. Lady Lily was crying as though she’d never stop. No explanation was necessary. Everyone knew what happened when a human went into the Kingdom of Forgetfulness.

Inside the mist, the knight had never felt so good before. He wondered why he was covered in some kind of metal suit.

“I was going to do something,” he mumbled, “but I can’t remember what it was. Oh, well. If I can’t remember, then it must not have been very important.”

The knight wandered through a long meadow until he got tired. Then he lay in the tall grass, staring at the sky and thinking of absolutely nothing. Soon a tiny shining creature landed on him. It was a faerie. The knight began to introduce himself.

“Hello,” he began. “My name is . . . .”

What was it? Some letters came to mind. W? K? No, that didn’t spell anything. There was something else. “Mort” something. Blechhh! That couldn’t be it either. Oh, well, he decided. If he couldn’t remember that, then maybe it wasn’t very important either!

**W.K. is lost in the Kingdom of Forgetfulness, home of the faerie tribe. These tiny creatures are very good at hiding. There are six faeries in this picture. Can you see where they are?**



Some distance away, Woody traveled toward the same area as his friends. His cart rolled by itself, faster than humanly possible. Still Woody wished that Wizards really could fly the way people said they could.

Although Morlock knew that the Castle Comfort people had consulted Woody for help, Woody hoped Morlock wouldn't expect him to leave Wizard Village. Still, Woody knew Morlock would soon be within spell-casting range of his friends, and he was frightened.

"Maybe I can conjure up a little something to slow Morlock down," Woody mumbled. "Something subtle, yet potent."

— Woody opened a box and took some powder from it. He whispered a spell and cast the powder into the air. The slight breeze blowing on the Duke's troops became a wind. Morlock, Malefort, and his troops struggled on, but only at half the speed they had before.

"Haven't lost the old touch," Woody chuckled as he watched the struggling figures in his crystal ball. "I've slowed them down using the kind of magic that won't even make Morlock suspicious that another wizard is in the area."

As Woody's cart sped toward his friends, he hoped he could keep that element of surprise until he met Morlock face-to-face.

Back at the Kingdom of Forgetfulness, Castle Comfort's household had enough troubles without knowing that the Duke's troops were bearing down on them. All they knew was that W.K. was in grave danger.

"If he spends too much time in that place," Dragon said urgently, "we'll never see him again."



“How will we get him out?” Wilke asked. “Anyone who goes in there forgets what they’re doing!”

“I don’t care,” Lily sobbed. “I’m going in anyway.”

“I’m getting an idea,” Wilke said suddenly. “Miranda, is Beldin immune to faerie magic?”

Miranda looked at Beldin, then at Wilke. “Beldin says he’s immune, but W.K. won’t know him. And Beldin can’t talk to W.K. the way he can talk to me.”

“That doesn’t matter. My plan will work if W.K. feels as strongly about his lady in there as he does out here.”

Wilke and Miranda tied Lady Lily tightly to Beldin until they were sure she could not untie herself.

They all hugged Lady Lily and Beldin and wished them luck. Then Beldin stepped into the mist.

Lily immediately forgot everything.

“What a pretty place,” the lady thought. “And what a pretty animal I’m on.” She tried to get off, but found to her surprise that she was tied on.

“Oh, well,” she decided. “It’s a nice day for a ride.”

Beldin wandered through the kingdom for several minutes before running into W.K. The knight was playing with several faerie people, watching them fly here and there.

“What a nice man,” the lady said to the animal she was riding. “Let’s go over there.”

Beldin took Lady Lily to W.K. When W.K. looked up, he smiled.

“Hello, my name is . . . .”

“And mine is . . . .” the lady began, and then wondered what she was going to say. There was something familiar about the nice man, but she couldn’t remember what. She just knew that she liked him.

The knight looked up at the lady. He thought he'd never seen anybody so pretty. He felt that there was something else he ought to know, too, but he couldn't remember what. He just knew that wherever the lady was, that's where he wanted to be.

Suddenly, Beldin turned and headed toward the kingdom's outer border.

"No," said the lady. "I want to stay with the nice man!"

The knight stood up. "Wait," he said. "Don't go!"

The lady held out her hand. The man took it and walked beside the lady and the strange animal she sat on. Slowly Beldin kept walking to the edge of the Kingdom of Forgetfulness.

When all three stepped back into the normal world Miranda, Wilke, and Dragon cheered.

"Quick," Wilke said to W.K. "Give me your shoes."

W.K. did as he was asked, looking very puzzled. Wilke turned the shoes over and swept the dust from the bottom into a little pouch. Everyone was staring at Wilke as though he'd lost his mind.

"Faerie dust," Wilke said, smiling. "W.K. was walking on it. That *is* what we came to get, isn't it?"

Everyone laughed. In all the excitement, they'd almost forgotten!

When W.K. heard what had happened to him, he could hardly believe it. He didn't remember anything after stepping into the mist.

"How did you know your plan would work, Wilke?" he asked.

"The Wizard of the Woods once told me that only one thing's stronger than magic — and that's love."



All of W.K.'s friends are glad he's safe. It's a moment they'll never forget. What do you remember about it?

Look very carefully at the picture. Then turn the page and see how many questions you can answer without turning back to look.



1. How many buttons are on Wilke's shirt?
2. What is Dragon trying to eat?
3. Who is wearing a hat?
4. How many hooves is Beldin standing on?
5. Whose hair is braided?

"The Kingdom of Forgetfulness is just over that next rise, sire," Morlock reported to the Duke. "According to my magic ring, all of the Castle Comfort crew is gathered there, just as we anticipated."

"GOOD! THE ODDS WILL BE SIX AGAINST A THOUSAND. I LIKE THAT."

"I can hardly wait to set my magic on them," Morlock cackled. "I'd like to see that goody-goody Wizard of the Woods' face when he finds out I've ruined all his pals."

As soon as the Duke and Morlock crossed the next rise, they caught sight of W.K., Lily, Wilke, Miranda, Dragon, and Beldin. Morlock made a powerful sign over his magic ring and prepared a lightning ball that could level a city.

"Here go the four humans!"

"WAIT!" the Duke commanded before Morlock could hurl his lightning ball.

"Drat," Morlock mumbled. "I never get any fun." He shrugged philosophically, flicked his hand, and the ball of fire dissolved into a pouf of green smoke. Aloud he said, "Your wish is my command, oh mighty one. But why do you stop me from killing your enemies?"

"I WANT THEM PRISONERS INSTEAD. I'LL PARADE THEM AROUND TO ALL THE OTHER CASTLES, AND WHEN THEY SEE WHAT I DO WITH HOSTAGES, THEY'LL ALL SURRENDER WITHOUT A WHIMPER."

"No problem, Duke. Helpless prisoners coming right up," Morlock said brightly.

From his ring came a bluish-gray smoke, which wafted straight toward Beldin and his friends.

"What's that?" Wilke asked.

Beldin saw the mist and flashed a warning to Miranda. "Run," she said. "Beldin says that smoke is dangerous!"

Nobody answered. Her friends — all closer to the smoke than she — were magically frozen still.

Beldin scooped Miranda up, and the two took off into the nearest patch of forest. Both hoped they'd run into help — maybe a gremlin or two. But instead they ran into the one person they really didn't expect.

"Thank goodness I've found you all," Woody said as his cart swerved to avoid running into Beldin. "You have to get out of here. The Duke of Malefort and the Evil Wizard Morlock are headed this way!"

"You're telling us," Miranda gasped.

Meanwhile the Duke and Morlock were loading the frozen Wilke, W.K., Lily, and Dragon onto wagons as though they were firewood.

"GOOD WORK!" Malefort roared. "JUST THE WAY I LIKE MY PRISONERS — OVER EASY! HAHAAHAHA!" The Duke slapped Morlock on his back so hard the Evil Wizard almost swallowed his tongue.

"Thanks a lot, sire," Morlock coughed.

The Duke stopped. He was no longer smiling.

"Er — anything wrong, sire?"

"WHERE'S THE UNICORN? I THOUGHT YOU SAID THAT UNICORN WAS HERE."

Morlock blinked in confusion, then realized Malefort was right for once. There should be six prisoners and only four were here. The unicorn was missing and so was one of the humans.

The Duke grabbed Morlock by the beard.

"USE YOUR MAGIC, WIZARD. FIND THAT UNICORN OR *YOUR* HEAD WILL GRACE MY FEASTING HALL INSTEAD OF THE UNICORN'S."

"Y-Yes, sire," Morlock answered, peering furiously into his magic ring. "I'm sure my ring will find its location right away. Oh, no!"

"WHAT IS IT? IS YOUR RING BROKEN? IS THAT UNICORN MAKING MAGICAL TROUBLE FOR US? WHAT? WHAT?"

"The Wizard of the Woods is here. Close enough to cause us as much trouble as *two* unicorns, if he wants. And I'd say, since we've just fresh-frozen his friends, he'll want to!"

"WIZARDS! I'M SICK OF WIZARDS! YOU TAKE CARE OF HIM YOURSELF — USE SOME MAGIC. TURN HIM INTO A TOAD OR SOMETHING! I'VE GOT MY PRISONERS, AND I'LL HAVE THAT UNICORN, TOO."



The Duke of Malefort and his men are marching through a fog. Fill in the missing parts of the picture (hidden by the fog).





Malefort took his load of prisoners back toward his troops. Dragon was so heavy it took two wagons to load him up. Morlock scouted the area for signs of the Wizard of the Woods.

Woody had put Miranda and Beldin in a hiding place, and told his cart to follow them. That done, he and his magic wand waited for Morlock to show up within major spell-casting range. It didn't take long.

"At last we meet," Morlock sneered. "I hope you've written a will."

"The pleasure is all yours," Woody countered. "Look, Morlock, why not save us all some time? Give up now. I saw your grade point average in sorcery school. You're not that good."

"I'm not *good* at all, dear sir. I'm quite evil — and very skilled in black arts. As far as giving in to you and your puny magic — when shrimp whistle, I'll consider it!"

"Enough talk."

"I agree — CATCH!"

Morlock twirled his wand, sending a good-sized fireball hurtling toward Woody.

Woody laughed. "Kid stuff," he hooted as he conjured up a small raincloud that chased the fireball down and doused it.

"Fool!" Morlock hissed. "I only used that to buy time. Here's a little something I've saved for the occasion. You're about to find your roots, Wizard!"

Quickly Morlock whispered a spell over his magic ring that was so powerful that Woody could feel the air change at the words alone. Worse, Woody didn't

recognize the language of the chant, so he wasn't sure he could counter what was coming up. He silently called upon all the forces of good to come to his aid.

A flash of brilliant orange shot out of Morlock's magic ring. It charged at Woody with terrible speed and power. In a split second, Woody knew he couldn't beat this one.

Suddenly an idea popped into his head. He'd once seen a boy throw an apple at another boy, who'd hit it with a stick. The apple flew off in another direction. Woody waved his wand like a baseball bat. Just as the deadly orange flash was about to hit him, it deflected instead.

"Tough luck, Morlock," Woody jeered. Then he noticed that he'd sent the fireball heading straight for the cart — and Miranda! In his most commanding voice, Woody said:

*"WON! — ADNARIM TCETORP, RORRIM!"*

The bushes hiding the cart parted, and something from Woody's cart rose and stood in front of Miranda.

"Don't move, Miranda," Woody yelled, "no matter what!"

Morlock laughed. "You seek to shield the child from my magic? That fireball could go through solid lead! All you've got there is a . . . NOOOOOOO!"

Morlock screeched as the hideous orange bolt reflected from Woody's shield and bounced back straight for Morlock. When it hit the Evil Wizard, the ground he stood on exploded into an orange blaze. When the smoke cleared, nothing of Morlock was left.

"All I've got, dear Morlock, is the one thing that

bounces back everything that hits it — a mirror.”

Miranda left the cart and ran to Woody. “You saved my life! Thank you!”

“Wrong, Miranda. I called on the forces of good and got some instant help. I think I know where I got it from, too.”

Woody walked over to Beldin.

“Thank you, Beldin. You saved us all.”

“Where did the Wizard go, Woody?”

“Oh, he’s right here. Remember when he said I was about to find my roots? Look closely at that fernwort plant.”

Miranda hadn’t noticed, but there was a very odd-looking bit of greenery growing where nothing had been before. She bent over it.

“I told you that evil turns back on a person,” Woody commented, “and Beldin helped me prove that point most literally.”

Miranda heard a faint sound coming from the odd plant.

“I’ll get you for this! I’ll get you all!”

“NOT A BAD PIECE OF WORK, WIZARD,” a voice boomed out from nearby.

“The Duke of Malefort!” Miranda shuddered.

“I SUPPOSE YOU’D LIKE TO DO SOMETHING SIMILAR TO ME, BUT YOU WON’T GET THE CHANCE. I’VE GOT A FEW LITTLE THINGS OF YOURS THAT YOU WON’T SEE AGAIN IF YOU DON’T PLAY ALONG.”

Malefort held up something that looked like a statue. It was Wilke.

“I UNDERSTAND THIS WILL SHATTER IF I DROP IT. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TRY?”

“No! Please!” Miranda begged.

“THROW DOWN YOUR WAND IF YOU WANT YOUR FRIENDS TO LIVE.”

Woody grimaced, then did as he was told. “You don’t give a Wizard much choice, do you?”

“NOW SEND OUT THE UNICORN.”

“What unicorn?” Woody lied.

The Duke held Wilke over his head and prepared to smash him. Then he stopped, laughing, as Beldin stepped out from behind a shrub.

“I KNEW IT. YOU’RE NOBLE-MINDED,” the Duke sneered at the beautiful unicorn.

“Please,” Miranda said desperately, “do something, Woody.”

“YES, DO SOMETHING,” Malefort jeered. “THAT’LL BE THE SIGNAL FOR MY MEN TO THROW MY OTHER LITTLE STATUES — A KNIGHT, A LADY, AND A DRAGON — INTO THE NEAREST LAKE.

“SLIP INTO THIS HALTER, MY VERY OWN UNICORN. I HAVE A PLACE FOR MAGICAL MEDDLERS — YOUR HIDE WILL GRACE MY FEASTING HALL! HAHAA-HAHA!”

Beldin meekly put his head into the halter, and the Duke led him away. Wilke was balanced across the Duke’s horse like a stack of wood.

Miranda stood sobbing, watching her whole world disappear. Woody tried to comfort her but she wouldn’t allow him to touch her.

“You — you let that man take Beldin and Wilke and W.K. and Lady Lily and Dragon, and you didn’t even lift a finger. You’re not a wizard — you’re a coward! I wish I’d never known you!”

“Miranda,” Woody said gently. “You’re saying all those things because you’re upset. Trust me. I have a little something up my sleeve that I’ve been saving for when the good Duke turned his back. Ah — here it is now.”

Miranda blinked as she saw that there really *was* something crawling out of Woody’s magician’s robe through the sleeve. It was his crystal ball!

Woody held his precious crystal, smiled, and mumbled a powerful and ancient spell. Miranda didn’t understand all of it, but the last part was, “Let all things done come undone.”

Malefort tossed Wilke into the cart with W.K. and Lily, and rode with Beldin to the head of his troops.

“ONWARD. TO CASTLE COMFORT!” he commanded.

Just as the troops began moving out, Woody’s spell took effect and everything done came undone. In an instant, buckles unbuckled, saddles loosened, laces untied, and armor fell off of every man in Malefort’s troops! The Evil Wizard’s spell also came undone. W.K. grabbed Lady Lily, Dragon grabbed Wilke, and they all came out of the confusion intact. Beldin’s halter also slipped off. But before leaving, Beldin aimed his razor-sharp horn at the back of the Duke’s now unarmored rump.

Screeching in pain, the Duke turned and grabbed for his sword. The swordbelt was undone! Frightened, he picked up his shield. The armhold fell off! He called for his soldiers, but panic had settled over his troops. Instead of obeying their commander, fierce soldiers were trying to catch their horses with one hand and



hold up the last of their clothing with the other!

Beldin trotted back to his friends, looking rather pleased with himself. He sent a mental message to Miranda.

“Beldin has chased the Duke into the Kingdom of Forgetfulness,” Miranda translated. “We might see him again someday — but not for twenty or thirty years!”

Beldin and all his friends are safe at last. Dragon is anxious to get back to Wizard Village and make the potion that will break Morlock's original spell. Work the rebus to find out what Dragon wants to be. It's something that most people don't want to be!



Dragon wants to be

\_\_\_\_\_ !

Out of danger at last, the happy group headed back toward Wizard Village. Dragon and Beldin walked, but everyone else rode in Woody's cart. It was fun sitting in a wagon that wasn't pulled by an animal, Wilke thought.

Woody picked up Wilke's thoughts. "You know, someday lots of people will travel in wagons that move on their own power."

For a minute Wilke was startled. Then he laughed.

"You don't fool me, Woody," he said. "I know when you're kidding!"

Thanks to the speed of Woody's self-propelling cart, the trip back to Wizard Village took much less time than the trip out had. As they came to Woody's house several villagers emerged from it.

"Is everything ready?" Woody asked. They nodded.

"Then let us go in, my friends."

The cauldron fire in Woody's spell-room was lit, and something was already bubbling inside the big black pot. Everyone gathered around. One by one, each person dropped their contributions to Dragon's cure into the cauldron.

"A piece of leprechaun gold," W.K. said.

"Three drops of giant's tears," added Miranda.

"A piece of wood from an ogre's fire," Wilke continued.

"A hair plucked from the beard of a troll," Lady Lily said.

"And a pinch of faerie dust from the Kingdom of Forgetfulness," Dragon concluded. "Is it going to be ready soon?"

"Almost," Woody said. "Beldin, may I tell them now?"

The unicorn nodded.

"One more ingredient is needed, and I was sworn not to tell you about it until now. The last and most vital ingredient is a unicorn horn."

"WHAAAAT?" everyone cried at once.

Dragon looked insulted.

"No way! I'm not using Beldin's horn just to get myself well again. I'll learn to like fruit and cheese and other uncooked foods!"

"That's right," Lily added. "We love Dragon whether he makes fire or not! And we love Beldin far too much to harm him in this way."

"That's all very fine," Woody said sadly. "But a fire-breathing dragon is also Castle Comfort's best defensive weapon. And Beldin refuses to leave you all defenseless."

Miranda translated the mental messages Beldin sent her. "He says it won't hurt. He says he'll be fine in Enchanted Valley. The other unicorns will understand, and . . . ." Miranda stopped. "You stop sending me thoughts like this," she snapped angrily at Beldin. "I won't listen to them! None of us will!"

Stubborn Beldin simply turned to Woody and bent his head, placing his horn onto a block of wood. A gremlin standing nearby with a kind of sawing machine approached.

"WAIT!" Miranda screamed. "I have an idea!"

Woody signaled his gremlin to stop.

"Let's try something else first," Miranda begged. "If it doesn't work, then you can do whatever you want. Beldin, come over here, please."

Beldin approached the cauldron.

“Put your horn down into the potion and stir it.”

The unicorn did as she asked. The brownish liquid turned perfectly clear.

“By golly,” Woody cried in astonishment, “why didn’t I think of that?”

Miranda hugged Beldin and laughed. “Beldin wonders why *he* didn’t think of it!”

“This is all quite touching,” Dragon interrupted, “but could we get back to the problem at hand?”

“Of course, of course,” Woody chuckled. “It’s time for your big moment, Dragon.”

W.K. found a cup, scooped some liquid into it from the cauldron, and blew on it to cool it down.

“Don’t bother cooling it,” Dragon said. “My mouth is fireproof.”

But anxious as he was to drink it, Dragon looked at the cup uncertainly when he was handed his potion at last. Suppose it didn’t work? Suppose one of the ingredients was wrong? Suppose it turned him into a fire-breathing toad instead?

“What are you waiting for?” Woody asked impatiently. “An appetizer?”

Dragon shrugged fatefully.

“Down the hatch,” he said, gulping the liquid quickly.

The group waited for something to happen.

“Well?” W.K. asked anxiously.

Dragon burped. Smoke came out of his nostrils.

“Ahhhhh . . . ahhhh . . . ahhhh . . .”

“Oh, no!” Woody yelled. “Quick, Dragon — aim for the window!”



“CHOOOOOOOOO!”

Dragon’s sneeze scorched the windowsill and every plant across the yard. It even baked all the dough in a nearby village bakery.

Dragon looked embarrassed. “Sorry about that,” he apologized.

Lady Lily laughed. “Don’t you ever, ever be sorry about that,” she said.

That night Woody, Beldin, and the Castle Comfort household celebrated Dragon’s recovery. Dragon roasted apples for everyone. But in the morning it was time for good-byes.

“It’s time for Beldin to return to Enchanted Valley,” Miranda reported. “The other unicorns need him.”

“I think I know how you feel, Beldin,” W.K. said. “I’ll miss you, and Woody as well, but it’ll be good to be home again. Right, Lily?”

“Right, W.K.”

W.K.’s face lit up in surprise.

“Why, Lily — you didn’t call me Mortimer!”

“Dragon and I had a little chat last night. I never knew you hated that name so much. Why didn’t you say anything?”

“I didn’t want to hurt your feelings,” W.K. replied sheepishly.

“Silly,” Lady Lily said, giving W.K. a little kiss. “But sweet.”

Wilke shook hands with Woody and then turned to Beldin.

“I’ll miss you a lot. I always do. Keep in touch, will you?”

Miranda hugged Beldin for the last time, then turned to Wilke.

"Beldin says that we're all the kind of friends who are in touch, no matter where we are!"

"Well," Dragon broke in. "Let's get going. We've got a lot of cooking to catch up on, and I'm hungry already!"

## PUZZLE ANSWERS

Page 8.



Page 20.



Page 15. 2. FARM, HARM, HARE, HIRE, HIKE. 3. MILK, MILE, MOLE, HOLE, HOME. 4. BURN, BORN, CORN, CORD, COLD. 5. YAWN, LAWN, LAWS, LAGS, LEGS. 6. SHOE, SHOP, CHOP, CHIP, CLIP.

Page 24. One chair has three legs. The calendar says June 32. The clock has 14 numbers on it. A rabbit is hopping across the ceiling. The window looks to an underwater scene. A snake is in the candle holder. The fire is upside down.

Page 33. Trolls 2 and 5 are identical.

page 38. 1-e, 2-f, 3-b, 4-d, 5-h, 6-c, 7-g, 8-a.

Page 41.



Page 49.



Page 45. 1-None, Wilke's shirt is laced. 2-An apple. 3-Lady Lily. 4-Three. 5-Miranda's.

Page 56. Dragon wants to be FULL OF HOT AIR!





## Dragon has lost his fire, and Castle Comfort is in danger!

The evil Duke of Malefort has put Dragon under a terrible spell. Only Beldin the unicorn can help his castle friends find the magic ingredients to cure Dragon and save the castle.

Join them in their magical adventure, but beware! There are mysterious mazes, wizardly word puzzles, and monstrous memory quizzes for you to master!



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